WESTERN PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

PACIFIC ISLANDS FISHERY NEWS

A Publication of the Western Pacific Fisheries Council

A COUNCIL AUTHORIZED BY THE FISHERY CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1976 (P.L. 94-265)
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COUNCIL GOALS: FISHERY DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, based in Honolulu, was created by the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976, which established exclusive United States jurisdiction over all but highly migratory species of fish in each 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around the islands of American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and other U.S. possessions in the Pacific.

The Council is responsible for managing the fisheries in each EEZ toward the goal of encouraging economic development while preventing over-fishing. After identifying fish species in need of management and analyzing the biological, economic, social and environmental factors affecting them, the Council prepares Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) designed to ensure that only the optimum yield of each fishery is taken by commercial and recreational fishermen.

The Council is made up of 14 members drawn from the fishing community and the governmental bodies of the various islands within its jurisdiction. Government members are appointed by the Secretary of Commerce by virtue of their fishery-related responsibilities in state, territorial and federal governments. Meetings of the Council alternate among the different island areas to encourage public interest and participation. The Council encourages cooperative fisheries management and development efforts with island governments throughout the Pacific.

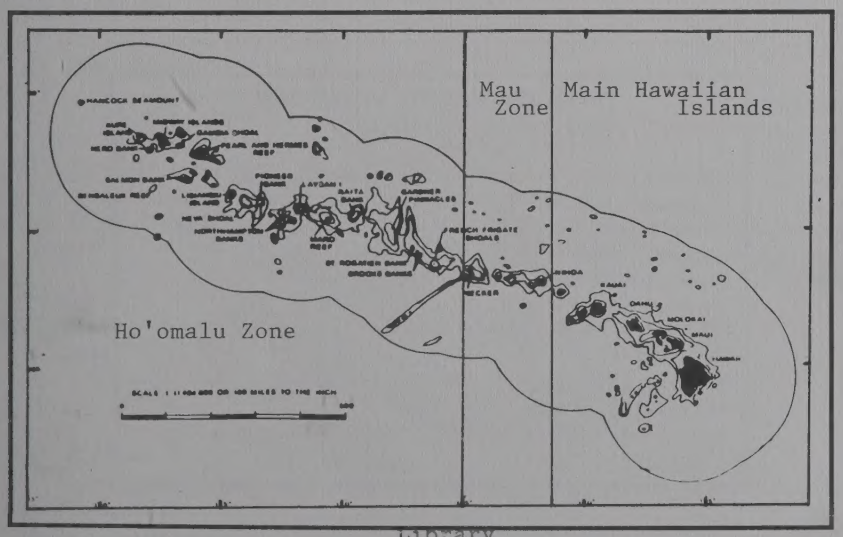
LIMITED ENTRY: A FEDERAL FIRST

The Council has accomplished a first in fisheries management with the approval, on July 15, 1988, of Amendment 2 of the Fishery Management Plan for Bottomfish and Seamount Groundfish. Under that amendment, "on January 1, 1989 Hawaii's Northwestern Hawaiian Island (NWHI) bottomfisherman will be participating in the first Federally implemented limited entry program in the country" says William Paty, Chairman of both the Council and the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources. The new regulations will control the number of new entrants into the commercial bottomfish fishery in designated zones within the NWHI.

Under the limited entry program, fishermen will be required to obtain new National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) permits to fish either the "Ho'omalu Zone," the area extending from 165 degrees West longitude to the western boundary of the NWHI, or the "Mau Zone," the area east of 165 degrees West to 161 degrees West. (See map). Permits will be issued for only one zone at a time and will be valid for one calendar year. Federal commercial bottomfish permits for these zones presently in use will become invalid on January 1, 1989. Applications for the new permits must be submitted one month in advance of their effective dates and are available at the Western Pacific Program Office of the NMFS.

Under the new plan, there are three ways to be grandfathered into the program. Any owner of a commercial bottomfish boat that caught and sold bottomfish from the NWHI before August 7, 1985 will be automatically eligible for a Ho'omalu Zone permit. Additionally, non-boat owners may receive a Ho'omalu Zone permit if they served as captains in the NWHI bottomfish fishery prior to the cutoff date of August 7, 1985 and now own at least 50% interest in a vessel presently active in the NWHI bottomfish industry. Lastly, anyone having evidence of incurring substantial financial expenditures or receiving written approval for a loan to obtain a vessel for bottomfishing in the NWHI prior to the cutoff date will also qualify for a Ho'omalu zone permit. Grandfather privileges must be exercised within 5 years. Once in the fishery, permit holders must make at least 3 landings consisting of 2,500 pounds or more of NWHI bottomfish each year to maintain their Ho'omalu Zone permits.

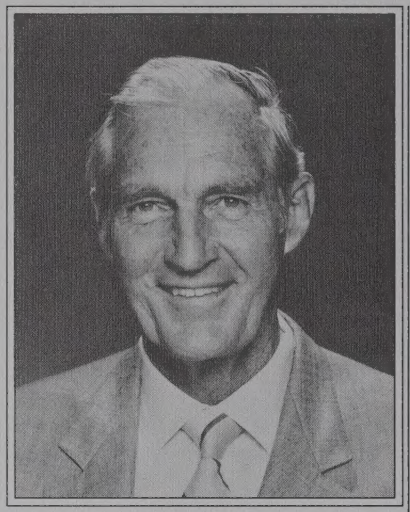
Fishermen not grandfathered but wishing to bottomfish in the Ho'omalu Zone must earn "eligibility points." In general, points are accumulated by fishing in the area surrounding the main Hawaiian Islands or in the Mau Zone. Further details



ON THE INSIDE:

Council Profiles
FMP update
Calender of events

Library
NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service
SWFC Honolulu Laboratory F/SWC2
2570 Dole Street
Honolulu, HI 96822-2396



William W. Paty, Chairman, DLNR

concerning these requirements, as well as the application process, can be obtained from the Western Pacific Program Office of the NMFS.

The Hawaiian term "Ho'omalu" means "to take care of," consistent with the Council's intent to protect NWHI bottomfish stocks from overfishing. As Paty observed, "since 1984, the Council has listened to fishermen express concerns over declining catch rates of opakapaka. The past couple years, fishermen have had to either target other species like onaga, or travel farther up the island chain in search for opakapaka. Both strategies were attempts to stop the declining profitability of their fishing trips. the fishermen felt that in 1984, and the years following, that too many vessels were entering the fishery and, as a result, on an average trip most boat owners were losing money."

Although just recently implemented on the Federal level in the United States, limited entry is not a new concept in applied fisheries management. Alaska, for example, has had a limited entry program for its salmon fishery for several years. Australia's rock lobster fishery has been under a limited entry policy since 1963 and in 1985 the New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries established a limited quota system for their deep-water trawl fishery. Paty sees the new program as both flexible and conservation minded: "It's adaptable enough to allow new boats to enter when the fishery is healthy from both a biological and economic standpoint and provides a way to wisely utilize bottomfish stocks today while ensuring their future productivity."

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Precious Corals

Amendment 1 to the Precious Corals FMP has been approved by the Secretary of Commerce. This amendment implements three management measures: (1) it includes the U.S. Possessions under the FMP as a combined single Exploratory Area with a 1000 kg annual harvest quota for all species of precious corals combined; (2) it places all species of Corallium harvested or likely to be harvested within the Management Unit Species (MUS) of the FMP; and (3) it creates a method for issuing Experimental Fishing Permits.

Bottomfish

Amendment 2 to the Bottomfish and Seamount Groundfish FMP was approved by the Secretary of Commerce on July 15, 1988 and will take effect on January 1, 1989. This amendment establishes the first federal limited entry program in the United States. [redacted]. The bottomfish fishery has recently been experiencing the lowest fleet size observed in recent history while maintaining a relatively high catch per trip (4,100 lbs.). For this reason, the timing of implementing the recently approved limited entry program is deemed ideal.

Crustaceans

At the 61st Council meeting it was decided to proceed with frameworking the Crustaceans FMP. The Plan Monitoring Team discussed this topic thoroughly at its meeting in May of this year and recommended that the Council proceed with frameworking via scenario building with each scenario including a blend of quantitative and qualitative information.

Billfish and Associated Species

On June 7, 1988 President Reagan signed the South Pacific Tuna Act, which implements the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Treaty. Under the terms of the treaty, U.S. tuna fishermen may purchase regional licenses to fish in some 10 million square miles of tuna-rich waters in the South Pacific Ocean, including the waters under the jurisdiction of the Pacific Island signatories. It is anticipated that the license fees and the economic assistance agreement associated with the treaty will further the economic development and strengthen the democratic traditions of the Pacific Island states participating in the treaty.

WESTERN PACIFIC FISHERIES COUNCIL
APPOINTED MEMBERS

EDWIN A. EBISUI, Jr.
Wahiawa, Hawaii
FRANK FARM, Jr.
Honolulu, Hawaii
ROY N. MORIOKA
Honolulu, Hawaii
GERTRUDE I. NISHIHARA
Aiea, Hawaii
PETER R. BARCINAS
Tamuning, Guam
J. ANTHONY LANGKILDE
Pago Pago, A. Samoa
MELVIN D. MAKAIWI
Pago Pago, A. Samoa
E. CHARLES FULLERTON
Terminal Island, CA.
RAY TULAFONO
Pago Pago, A. Samoa
RUFO J. LUJAN
Agana, Guam
WILLIAM W. PATY
Honolulu, Hawaii
NICK M. LEON GUERRERO
Saipan, MP (Observer)

CONGRESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS:

$20.00 fishing fee proposal
3 to 12 mile extension of U.S. waters

MARINE LICENSE BILL

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is exploring the possibility of including a marine license bill on the agenda for the 1988-89 congressional year. NOAA has completed its draft of the bill entitled "The Exclusive Economic Zone Revenue Raising Act of 1988," which would require the payment of an annual $20.00 fee for each fisherman aboard a fishing vessel within the Exclusive Economic Zone and an additional fee of 1.75% of the ex vessel value of fish covered by a Federal conservation program that are ultimately used or sold for commercial purposes. Net revenues from these user fees would be dedicated exclusively to programs related to resource conservation and management and, under the current draft of the bill, the Secretary of Commerce would be required to consult with the Regional Fishery Management Councils and the interstate marine fisheries commissions to ensure that program expenditures reasonably match the source of revenues on a regional basis.

U.S. TERRITORIAL SEA

In response to the call from U.S. representative Lowry to extend the U.S. territorial sea from three miles to twelve miles and to establish a National Oceans Policy Commission for the purpose of formulating a comprehensive oceans policy, NOAA general counsel Timothy R. E. Keeney summarized the views of the Department of Commerce before the House Subcommittee on Oceanography. In commenting on H.R. 5069, Keeney indicated that the department supported the extension of the territorial sea to twelve miles with the proviso that any action accomplishing this should not affect existing law relating to the extended areas. He also indicated that the department strongly opposed the establishment of a National Oceans Policy Commission for the reason that mechanisms necessary to address ocean policy issues are already available within the Executive and Legislative Branches.

COUNCIL PROFILES

We are pleased to introduce two new members of the Council:

Mr. Farm is a 1945 graduate of St. Louis High School and attended the University of Hawaii. He worked for 25 years in Federal public service, retiring in 1972 as Staff Officer and Chief of Communications Services, U.S. Army Strategic Communications Command.

Mr. Farm brings a wealth of fishing and diving experience to the Council. He has been involved in fishing since 1952 and has completed more than 10,000 scuba dives. He is the past president of the Hawaii Council of Diving Clubs and the Alii Holo Kai Fishing Club. He is a member of several other organizations, including the Underwater Society of America and the Salt Water Aquarium Society of Hawaii. He holds a U.S. Coast Guard Operators License and has been the skipper of a 100 gross ton vessel.

The Council is greatly appreciative of the time and energy that Mr. Farm has brought to the fisheries conservation and management program through his participation as an Advisory panel member and the Bottomfish Subpanel Chairman. The Council is looking forward to working with Mr. Farm in his new role as a Council member.

Mr. Barcinas is a resident of Guam who received his Master of Science Degree in Marketing from Colorado State University in 1983 after completing his undergraduate education at the University of Guam. He is currently the Acting Director of the Guam Department of Commerce and was appointed by the Governor to the Pacific Fisheries Development Foundation as a director.

Mr. Barcinas has a great deal of experience in marketing and tourism and is knowledgeable in trade subjects and economic information pertaining to Guam, Micronesia and the Pacific Basin. His background and experience will provide the Council with valuable insight into the impact of tourism on fisheries management and development not only in his home area, but within the Council's larger jurisdiction.

SEPTEMBER 1988

UNITED SPORTS FISHERMEN
September 16-18, 1988, (Friday - Sunday)
Port the Islands Resort, Florida

TORCH OAHU CHAPTER MEETING
September 20, 1988, (Tuesday); 7:00 P.M.
McCully-Moiliili Public Library
Honolulu, Hawaii

SIXTH ANNUAL NATIONAL FISHERY LAW SYMPOSIUM
September 29-30, 1988, (Thursday - Friday)
Washington Athletic Club
Seattle, Washington

OCTOBER 1988

MARINE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
October 5-6, 1988, (Wednesday - Thursday)
Sheraton Premier at Tysons Corner
Vienna, Virginia

REGIONAL COUNCIL AD HOC COMMITTEE ON MAGNUSON ACT AMENDMENTS
October 6-8, 1988, (Thursday - Saturday)
San Francisco, California

FISHERY OFFICERS WORKSHOP
October 12-14, 1988 (Wednesday - Friday)
East-West Center
Honolulu, Hawaii

NATIONAL FISHERMAN FISH EXPO
October 12-15, 1988, (Wednesday - Saturday)
Bayside Exposition Center
Boston, Massachusetts

ANNUAL NATIONAL MARINE TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE
October 31 - November 2, 1988 (Monday - Wednesday)
Baltimore, Maryland